AN

APOLOGY

FOR THE

Mysteries of the GOSPEL.

BEING A

SERMON

PREACHED

At *WHITE-HALL*,

Feb. 16. 167$\frac{2}{3}$.

BY

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PRINTED

By his Majesties special Command.

LONDON,

Printed by *E.T.* and *R.H.* for *James Collins* at the Kings Arms in *Ludgate-street*, 1674.

AN APOLOGY FOR THE Myſteries of the GOSPEL.

ROM. I. 16.

For I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt: For it is the power of God to Salvation, to every one that believeth.

THE former part of this Text (being delivered in terms unuſual) hath afforded matter of Diſputation to Interpreters.

The Queſtion is, Whether it be to be taken for a μείωσις; or to be underſtood ſimply, and plainly, according to the uſual import and meaning of ſuch expreſſions.

That St. *Paul*, ſo long after his Miraculous Converſion, (a little before his Appeal to *Cæſar*) drawing near to the finiſhing of his Courſe,

That St. *Paul*, after he had planted the Goſpel, from *Jeruſalem* round about unto *Illyricum*, after the compoſing of all thoſe excellent Epiſtles written before his bonds, whereof this Epiſtle to the *Romans* was the laſt.

Rom. 15. 19.

That St. *Paul* (I ſay) after all this, ſhould deſcend to ſo poor an Expreſſion as might inſinuate, that there was ſomething in the Goſpel,

Gospel, whereof it was possible, that some of the *Romans* might imagine that he ought to be ashamed.

(That in the judgement of St. *Paul* the Gospel should administer occasion for the Anticipation and Amolition of so contemptible a Prejudice,)

It seems to many very improbable, and therefore they say that the words are a μείωσις, and that the Apostle in saying that he was not ashamed of the Gospel, intended to signifie that he exulted and gloried in it.

Indeed, we finde our Apostle, not only in his other Epistles (and in his Apologies) but in this Epistle to the *Romans*, often magnifying his Office, and glorying in the Ministry of the Gospel which he had received; he

1 Tim. 1. 11.
1 Cor. 4. 4.
3. 7.
10. 8.

ſtyles it the light of the glorious Goſpel, a Miniſtration exceeding glorious, and profeſſes that if he ſhould boaſt of his Authority, he ſhould not be aſhamed.

Yet (with ſubmiſſion to better Judgements) I humbly conceive that he is not ſo to be underſtood in this place.

Though the Epiſtle was directed to thoſe at *Rome*, which were already Chriſtians; yet this paſſage was put in with reference to others, to whom the Epiſtle was to be communicated (perſons not yet converted to Chriſtianity.) To them who were already called to be Saints, whoſe Faith was ſpoken of throughout the World; to talk of not being aſhamed of the Goſpel, had been a μείωσις very incongruous.

Ver. 8. *hujus.*

But (on the other ſide) for him.

him who (by his original Commission) was constituted the Apostle of all the Gentiles, made a debtor to them all (as he sayes;) to the Wise as well as unwise, to the Greeks and Romans as well as the Barbarians. Act. 22. 21. Ver. 14.

That he, who in pursuance of this Commission, had already planted the Gospel amongst the more Barbarous Nations, from *Antioch* in *Syria* as far as *Lystra* and *Derbe*, Cities of *Lycaonia*; and among the Greeks, in all the chief Cities of *Macedonia* and *Achaia* (from *Jerusalem* round about unto *Illyricum*) so that nothing now remained but to Preach at *Rome* (as he speaks Emphatically) at *Rome* also. Acts 14.

That he, whose Preaching was not in a way of Humane wisdom or excellency of speech 1 Cor. 2. 1.

(in the way either of Rhetorical Harangue or Philoſophical argumentation) intending to preach at *Rome* (the Seat of the Empire of the World) the Reſort of the Noble, the Mighty, and the Wiſe, of all thoſe who in the Phraſe of our time, are ſtyled the *Beaux eſprits*, the Wits and Braveries of the World.

Briefly, that St. *Paul*, who knew the Prejudices which theſe men had againſt the Goſpel, and with what Contempt and Scorn they generally looked upon it (as a Diſpenſation whereof a man ought to be aſhamed.)

That St. *Paul*, who (as it appears by all his Epiſtles and Orations) well underſtood (the τὸ πρέπον τῆς λέξεως) the Congruity and decency of ſpeaking or of writing; intending, before he ſhould

ſhould conclude, (after he ſhould have evinced the Excellency of the Goſpel) to take ſtrength and confidence, and glory in his Miniſtration; Being yet in his *Proœmium* only, whoſe Office is (ὁδοποιεῖν) by a modeſt and ſmooth inſinuation, to make way for his Diſcourſe which was to follow; Rom. 15. 17.

I ſay, that in *this* place of his Epiſtle, he ſhould *take notice of the Prejudices* which lay againſt the Goſpel, and plainly and clearly (without a μείωσις) Anticipate and Obviate the imagination that he ought to be aſhamed of it; This, I humbly conceive to be moſt agreeable to the *deſign* and *Character* of St. *Paul*, and that according to this interpretation we ought here to conſider,

I. A ſup-

I. A ſuppoſal in the *Romans*, intimating the prejudices againſt the Goſpel. And therein,

1. A thing imagined; that *Paul* would not adventure to Preach the Goſpel at *Rome*.
2. The reaſon of the imagination, an Opinion that he would be aſhamed.

II. A removal or Amolition of that ſuppoſal, intimating the Iniquity of thoſe Prejudices: *viz.*

A Removal of

1. The thing that was imagined, I am ready to preach the Goſpel, even at *Rome*.
2. And of the imaginary reaſon of the ſuppoſition, For I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel.

III. The Grounds and Reaſons of this Amolition.

And

And these are drawn from two heads and adjuncts of the Gospel:

1. Necessarily implied and presupposed, and that is *Veritatis evidentia*, (if the Gospel were not the truth of God it could not be the power of God.)
2. Explicitely and expressly proposed, and that is *Virtutis excellentia*, it is the Power of God to Salvation (and that παντὶ πιστεύοντι) to every one that believeth. "*I am not ashamed of* "*the Gospel of Christ, for* "*it is the power of God to* "*Salvation to every one* "*that believeth.*

So that I am to speak of these two general Heads:

I. Of the Prejudices against the Gospel. II. Of

II. Of the Iniquity and unreaſonableneſs of thoſe Prejudices,

From whence it will follow that we ought to Preach the Goſpel, and not to be aſhamed.

Concerning which things I ſhall not endeavour at a Rhetorical Harangue, but crave leave that I may be admitted to ſpeak in a plain and humble Analytical and Didactical way of diſcourſe.

I. Then, I am to ſpeak of thoſe Prejudices againſt the Goſpel, from whence it is (by ſome perſons) imagined, that the Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to be aſhamed of it.

And herein I ſhall

1. Shew that there alwayes have been, and alwayes will be

be such Prejudices against the Gospel.

2. Enquire what it is in the Systeme of the Gospel, which is the special object of these Prejudices.

3. Then make a brief reflection upon the nature and symptomes of the Prejudices.

4. And upon the Characters of the persons most obnoxious to them.

1. First, That there alwayes have been, and alwayes will be, Prejudices against the Gospel (and an imagination in some persons, that Ministers and Christians ought to be ashamed of it) is so deplorably manifest, that I need not insist upon either the proof or declaration of it.

That it is, and hath been alwayes

wayes ſo, it is not only the unhappy complaint of the preſent Age, but hath been of every Age and Generation ſince the firſt Promulgation of the Goſpel; And that it will be ſo, we have an infallible aſſurance from Chriſt and his Apoſtles; That the latter dayes ſhall be times of Infidelity and departure from the Faith, that there will be Scoffers at the Goſpel, and cruel Mockers, we have the aſſurance of the Apoſtles St. *Paul*, St. *Peter*, and St. *Jude*.

2 Tim. 3. 1.
2 Pet. 3. 3.
Jude 18.

That when the Son of man ſhall come to judge the World, he ſhall hardly finde Faith on the Earth, we have the Prediction of our Lord Chriſt himſelf.

Luke 18. 8.

Briefly and ſummarily, our Lord Chriſt in ſeveral places of the Goſpel, declares and ſuppoſes

ses that many will be offended at him, that they will be ashamed of him, and of his words, both of his Person, and of his Gospel. Mat 23.31. Mar. 8.38.

Our Apostle declares that he himself is not ashamed, exhorts *Timothy* not to be ashamed, commends *Epaphroditus* that he was not ashamed; St. *Peter* exhorts those that suffered for the Gospel not to be ashamed. If there had not been an imagination in the world that they ought to have been ashamed, to what end were all these Declarations, Commendations, Exhortations concerning being not ashamed? 2 Tim. 1. 8, 12, 16. 1 Pet. 4. 16.

2. I pass therefore to the second thing propounded, to enquire what is the special Object of these Prejudices, or what are those things contained in the Gospel, whereof (in an especial man-

manner) it is imagined that we ought to be aſhamed.

Though the whole Syſtem of the Goſpel lies under Prejudices, yet not all parts of it alike, ſome more than other, and ſome by reaſon of the other.

The whole Goſpel is generally dividable into

1. Hiſtorical Narrations.
2. Moral Inſtitutions and Motives.
3. Dogmatical Myſteries.

Theſe are delivered ſometimes diſtinctly and ſeverally, and ſometimes they are combined and mixed together.

That there was ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, that he was born of *Mary*, that *Joſeph* was his reputed Father; The manner of his Life and of his Death, his Actions, and his Teachings, are

are matters meerly Hiſtorical.

That this reputed Son of *Joſeph* was indeed the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of a Virgin, and the like, have in them a Combination of the Myſtery together with the Hiſtory of the Goſpel.

[I ſtand not to ſhew, how the Morality is ſometimes ſimply delivered, and ſometimes in Combination with the Myſterious parts of the Goſpel]

1. Now concerning thoſe parts of the Goſpel which are merely and ſimply *Hiſtorical*, and *Moral*, I ſuppoſe they cannot be here intended; Becauſe that to ſuch perſons, as the *Romans* were, (men pretending to Reaſon and Philoſophy) they afford no colour for an imagination that a

Miniſter or Chriſtian ought to be aſhamed.

Suppoſing the truth of what is there delivered (whereof * I have ſpoken heretofore) what was there in the Birth, or Life, or Death; the Converſation, or Actions, (ordinary, or extraordinary) of Chriſt, or his Apoſtles, whereof in the opinion of a Philoſopher, a Chriſtian ought to be aſhamed?

*In Serm. againſt Antiſcripturiſts.

Was it the meanneſs of Chriſts Nativity? That he was the reputed Son of *Joſeph*, who was of a mean and deſpicable Occupation.

Was it that he lived an Ambulatory kinde of life? teaching and diſputing concerning good and evil, happineſs and unhappineſs, in the Synagogues and in the Temple, and the Streets

and

and Markets, and in the Wilderneſs (every where) Preaching the Doctrine of the Kingdom.

Or laſtly, Was it becauſe of the occaſion and manner of his Death? becauſe he was Condemned, and Executed by his Countrey-men, upon an accuſation of corrupting the People, and making an Innovation in Religion, upon pretence of holding intercourſe with God?

Every one of theſe circumſtances had been coincident in *Socrates* long before the time of the writing of this Epiſtle to the *Romans*.

He was the Son of *Sophroniſcus*, as poor a man as *Joſeph* (a Carver of Images in Stone) his Mother was a Midwife.

His Converſation was Ambulatory, diſcourſing and reaſon-

ing at all times, and in all places, (in *Academia*, in *Lycæo*, in *Foro*, in places of walking, and of publick Exercise; (when he ate, or drank, or played) in the Camp, the Market, or the Prison) with all the men he met withall concerning Virtue and Vice, and the *ſummum bonum*; concerning Wiſdom and Folly. * And he had been condemned and executed by the *Athenians*, upon the very ſame pretences which were objected againſt our Saviour.

* *Vide Xenoph. in Soc. Apologia.*

Yet all theſe diſadvantages had not hindred *Socrates* (at that time, after about 500 years) from the Admiration, and almoſt Adoration of all men pretending to Philoſophy and Wiſdom, not only amongſt all the reſt of the Gentile World, but even

even amongst the *Romans* also.

And therefore the mere *Historical* part of the Gospel could minister no colour of suspicion why a Minister or a Christian should be ashamed of it.

2. Moreover, the same may be said of those parts of the Gospel which are merely *Practical*, and *Moral*, (The Precepts concerning Piety and Justice, and Temperance in all the several branches of them, and the motives to them.)

The Morality of the Gospel infinitely excells the Institutions of any of the Heathen Philosophers, all that they could object against it, was its too great purity and holiness, that it puts a violence, and stretch upon Humane Nature, causing men to strain after degrees of purity and

ſanctity unpracticable and unattainable. It excells all the Precepts and Inſtitutes of the Jews, Chriſt made a Δευτέρωσις even of the Moral Law of *Moſes*, and tells us, that the Righteouſneſs
Mat. 5. 20. of Chriſtians muſt exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees; and the Apoſtle (com-
Heb. 8. 6. paring the entire Syſtems of the Moſaical and Chriſtian Oeconomies in reference to Chriſtian Duties and the motives to them,) juſtly pronounces, that the Chriſtian hath received a better Covenant, founded upon better Promiſes.

3. It remains therefore, that the peculiar and ſpecial Object of thoſe Prejudicate imaginations (whereby it is concluded, that Miniſters and Chriſtians ought to be aſhamed) are the

Articles

Articles of mere Belief, *Dogmatical Myſteries* of the Goſpel.

At the expence of your time and patience (in a long diſcourſe) to tell you what are the *Myſteries* of the *Goſpel*, were to ſuppoſe that (in compliance with the barbarity of later times) you had neglected to be inſtructed in your Catechiſm, and had need that one ſhould teach you what are the firſt Elements of Chriſtianity. My deſign engages me no further than only to name them, and that alſo very briefly.

In the two firſt Chapters to the *Corinthians*, we finde our Apoſtle handling this Argument largely and *ex profeſſo*.

And there he reduces the whole myſtery to two words, namely, *the Croſs of Chriſt*, he

tells them that he was ſent to Preach and not to Baptize, that this was that which Chriſt ſent him to Preach; and that he determined to know nothing elſe among them, but *Jeſus Chriſt and him Crucified*, and in *Chap.* 1. *v.* 23. he declares *this* to have been the occaſion of the Scandal, taken both by Jews and Gentiles; I *Preach Chriſt Crucified to the Jews a ſtumbling-block*, &c.

The *Scandal* taken, was againſt the *Myſteries* of the Goſpel, and the *Nature*, and *Mediatorian Office*; the Character and Perſonal Concernment of Chriſt, and work of Redemption by his blood ſpilt upon the Croſs, are the two great and comprehenſive heads to which the whole Myſtery of the Goſpel

is

is easily, naturally, and immediately reducible.

The Justification, Sanctification, entire Oeconomy of the salvation of man, depends immediately upon the work of Redemption by the blood of Christ.

The value and efficacy of his blood, resolves into the Excellency of his Person, and of his Nature; That he was the Son of God the Father, Conceived by the Holy Ghost, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one.

So that in the last resolution, the conjunction of the Divine and Humane Natures in the Unity of the Person of Christ, and the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Nature of the Godhead, is the πρῶτον μυστήριον of the Gospel.

And this is also the πρῶτον σκάνδαλον, that great thing whereof it

is

is imagined that a Chriſtian or a Preacher ought to be aſhamed.

Which will be yet more evident if we ſhall make a brief reflection upon the Nature and Symptoms of the Prejudices againſt the Goſpel, and the Character of the perſons more eſpecially obnoxious to theſe Prejudices.

3. Beſide the conſideration of Intereſt, (real or imaginary) and the diſappointment of mens deſires and expectations, (an ordinary, eminent and predominant ingredient in the prejudices of all men) there are two things which (in men pretending to prudence and vertue, or to reaſon and underſtanding) are apt to create a diſtaſte againſt any way of Inſtitution, or any Doctrine

ctrine wherein they are ſuppoſed or preſumed to be.

1. Τὸ αἶσχος, an apprehenſion of Turpitude or diſhoneſty, either intrinſecally contained in that which is propounded, or conſequentially involved with it.

2. Τὸ ἄτοπον or ἄλογον, an apprehenſion of ſome Abſurdity or unreaſonableneſs in it.

1. Of the former ſort, are Principles of Atheiſm, Irreligion, Immorality, the Doctrines of *Diagoras*, who denyed the being of God; of *Carneades*, concerning good and evil; of *Diogenes*, concerning Inceſt, &c. (which have an Intrinſick and immediate turpitude;) The Doctrine of *Epicurus* concerning the Mortality of the Soul, a conſequential Principle of all Impiety,

ty, Injuſtice, and Debauchery, if
1 Cor. 15. 32. that be the caſe, *Let us eat and drink*, &c.

Theſe are injurious to the Intereſt of Mankinde, and they put an indignity upon the practical reaſon and principles of men, and are apt to be diſtaſtefull and offenſive, inſtances whereof there are very many among the Heathens, (as among others that of the *Athenians*, who baniſhed *Protagoras*, and cauſed his Books to be burnt in the open Market-place, becauſe he wrote doubtfully concerning the being of a God) But as for theſe, it hath not been in the power of malice to faſten them upon the Goſpel, or in the compaſs of miſtake to ſuppoſe them in it; ſo that it hath been clearly exempted from this Prejudice.

2. The

2. The other thing that creates an averſion againſt any Doctrine is τὸ ἄτοπον or ἄλογον (an Apprehenſion of abſurdity or unreaſonableneſs in the things propounded) wherein the Wit and Theoretick Reaſon or Underſtanding of men takes it ſelf (no matter whether it be juſtly or unjuſtly) to be affronted, and this is as diſtaſtefull as the former.

An Inſtance whereof we have in the ſixth of St. *John*, where when Chriſt told thoſe that followed him of eating his fleſh and drinking his blood (ſpeaking in a figure not obvious to their vulgar underſtanding) they cryed out σκληρός ἐστιν οὗτος ὁ λόγος, (that was a hard ſaying) and taking themſelves to be abuſed they finally forſook him.

I ſay,

I ſay, that the apprehenſion of *Moral* turpitude, or *Logical* abſurdity are equally diſtaſteful, But in their more peculiar Subjects, and Symptoms, and Aptitude to miſtake and Prejudice, they differ.

The former averſion hath its peculiar ſeat and reſidence in Vertuous and Prudent men, (the οἱ φρόνιμοι and οἱ σπουδαῖοι) and diſcovers it ſelf in Zeal and Indignation, as againſt things dangerous and pernicious; the later is ſubjected in perſons, who are (or take themſelves to be) men of Wit and Learning (the σύνετοι, and the σόφοι,) the Symptoms of it are ſcorn and contempt, as of things abſurd and nonſenſical, fooliſh and irrational.

And in matters of this nature men are more inclinable to fall into

into mistake and Prejudice than in the former.

The Notions of *Truth and Falshood* lie more abstruse than those of *Good and Evil*, and men are more apt to be deceived in their wit, than in their honesty.

No Truths are so liable to mistake and prejudice as the professedly *My*sterious, and without controversie great is the *My*stery of Godliness. The ground of this Prejudice is an Impotency to distinguish betwixt Ἄτοπον and Ἀῤῥητον, betwixt Truth and Clearness, Obscurity and Absurdity, Being inconceivable and incredible, Being incomprehensible, and Being unaccountable.

4. This Impotency is an Infirmity to which the Brisk and the sudden, the forward and impatient,

patient, the talkative and disputatious, (all such as scorn the dulness of consideration, and think themselves above the drudgery of thinking) that is to say the Wits and *Beaux esprits* are of all men living the most obnoxious.

And from hence it is, that by persons of this Character to be despised, hath alwayes been the fortune of the Gospel.

The condition of the Gospel amongst our selves, I shall not in this place, at this time labour to declare, I come not hither to accuse my Nation; But that it was thus in the Apostles time we have sufficient assurance.

He tells us that the most eminent despisers (the *Contemptores legitimi*) of the Gospel, were the σοφοὶ, and the ὑπερέχοντες τῷ λόγῳ, and

and the συζητητὴς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. The Tropical Rhetorician, and the Flanting Orator, the Jibing Satyrist, and Scurrilous Comedian, the Sophistical Philosopher, and Everlasting Disputant, the Conceited Scribe, and Pharisaical Opiniator. *Where* (saith the Apostle) *is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this World?* 1 Cor. 1. 20.

The entertainment which the Gospel found at the hands of such as these was generally that of scorn and contempt.

Speaking in the person of men of this Character (whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*) our Apostle in the compass of two * Chapters doth nine times call the Mysteries of the Gospel foolishness, and foolish things, things weak, ignoble, and despised, * 1 and 2 of 1 Ep. to *Cor.*

ſpiſed, and things which are not.

The ſum of the whole Myſtery of the Goſpel is contained in two words, (*Chriſt Crucified*) Chap. 1. 23. *I preach* (ſaith he) *Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſcandal, to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*; the opinion they had of it was that it was an abſurd and a fooliſh diſpenſation, a diſpenſation whereof a Chriſtian, a Preacher ought to be aſhamed.

Thus much of the firſt general part of my Diſcourſe concerning the Prejudices againſt the Goſpel.

II. I come now to the ſecond part,

To ſhew the Iniquity and unreaſonableneſs of theſe Prejudices.

And

And here I shall endeavour to evince two things.

1. That there is reason for the Contemners of the Gospel to be ashamed of their Prejudices.

2. That there is no reason for Christians or Ministers to be ashamed of the Gospel.

1. First, There is reason for the Contemners of the Gospel to be ashamed.

Because their Contempt of it doth not proceed from any Generous or Noble Principle or qualification, it comes not from height of Spirit or Wit, from depth of Reason or Judgement, from largeness of Learning or Knowledge.

But from the want of all these

qualifications, and is finally resolved into an ungentile, and (if I may be permitted to speak plainly) a kinde of Ruſtical Ignorance and want of Ingenuity.

In *Acts* 17. 11. St. *Paul* comparing the *Theſſalonian* Jews with the *Beræans*, ſaith that the *Beræans* were more Noble (εὐγενέστεροι,) becauſe they did not precipitouſly, and temerariouſly reject the Goſpel, as the others did, but were diligent in ſearching of the Scriptures daily, and in a ſtrict enquiry concerning the Grounds and Motives to Belief alleadged by the Apoſtles (whether they were of that weight which was pretended) whether they were ſo or no.

In matters of ſo great moment as the Goſpel doth pretend to be (in

(in reference to this world, and that which is to come) to despise, or to reject the Proposals, without a just consideration of them, and without an impartial and ingenuous examination (and full understanding) of the Grounds and Reasons, upon which they are propounded, savours not of Prudence or Wisdom, Wit or Learning, Ingenie or Ingenuity; in one word, it savours neither of a Gentleman, nor a Scholar.

Now that this is the Case in the Contempt of the Gospel, I think it will appear if we shall attentively consider,

1. What was the Judgement of Christ (who was the Author of the Gospel) concerning this matter.

2. The signal Instances of the

contempt and neglect of the Goſpel mentioned in the Scriptures

3. If we ſhall make a rational enquiry into the Principles and Poſtulata, into which the contempt of the Goſpel is finally reſolved.

1. Firſt, this will receive evidence from the Judgement of Chriſt himſelf, concerning the reſolution of the rejection and contempt of the Goſpel.

I ſuppoſe none will be ſo Jewiſh as to object, the bringing of Chriſt to be a Witneſs in his own behalf, ſeeing his caſe is not the caſe of an ordinary witneſs, but reſolves it ſelf (as afterwards will be briefly ſhewed) into atteſtation of the greateſt credit.

I ſay then, that Chriſt himſelf (who

(who knew what was in man, and needed not that any man ſhould teach him) hath reſolved the contempt and rejection of the Goſpel into want of underſtanding, and of due and ingenuous conſideration, into Ignorance, and want of Candour and Ingenuity.

In the Parable of the Sower we finde this Argument largely and profoundly handled by our Saviour, the Parable is three times delivered in the Goſpel, and is very well known, ſo that I need not ſtand upon the declaration or repetition of it. The διάθεσις concerning the bad, (that is the high-way, the ſtony, the thorny) and the good, (that is, the fruitfull) ground, I ſhall not mention; He that ſhall harmonize the triple Narration, and

Mat. 13.3. Mar. 4. 3. Luk. 8. 5.

Analyze the Ἀνταπόδοσις of this Parable, ſhall finde, that our Saviour therein propounds and intimates the cauſes immediate and mediate; Mediate, nearer and remoter, of the reception and rejection of the Goſpel, whereof (as to the point in hand) the ſum is this:

That the irregular endeavour after the attainment of temporal good things, and the avoidance of temporal Evils, The luſt of the Fleſh, the luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, the Cares of the World and Deceitfulneſs of Riches, the luſt of other things, Pride and conceitedneſs of Wiſdom, and other Carnal Intereſts, are the cauſe of the want of an attentive, and patient, an ingenuous and impartial conſideration; And that the want of ſuch

a

a consideration, is the cause of the want of a thorow Understanding; and that the want of a thorow Understanding, this is the cause of the *Contempt*, or *Rejection*, or neglect of the Gospel.

In the Gospel of * St. *Luke* he resolves the causes of the Reception of the Gospel into honesty and goodness of heart (sincerity, and ingenuity) into a patient and constant attention to (hearing and keeping of) the word.

* Luk. 8. 15. ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ κατέχουσι καὶ καρποφοροῦσι ἐν ὑπομονῇ.

In the Gospel of St. *Matthew* he resolves the whole matter into this one point of a perfect and thorow Understanding. *The good ground*, says he, *is he that* * *hears the Word and brings forth fruit with understanding.*

Mat. 13. 23.

* Ἀκούων καὶ συνιεὶς.

A fair and honest, a candid and

and ingenuous attention and Conſideration, and a full Underſtanding, are the cauſes of the Reception; Therefore an Attention hypocritical and unſincere, An ignoble ignorance, perverſneſs, and want of candour and ingenuity, are the cauſes of the contempt of the Goſpel in the judgement of our Saviour.

2. The ſame alſo will further appear if we might be permitted to examine the ſeveral Inſtances of contempt and neglect of the Goſpel, and ſo go thorow the various degrees of the Symptoms of Infidelity mentioned in the Goſpel. I ſhall only touch them very briefly, and the heads of them are ſuch as theſe:

1. The egregious heſitation or ſlowneſs in believing.

2. The

2. The refusal or rejection of the Gospel.

3. The Offence or Scandal at it.

4. The quarrelling and disputation against it, and opposition to it.

5. The down-right scorn and contempt of it.

6. And lastly, the Persecution for it.

I say, if we might stay upon this Argument, it would appear, that as the Remoter causes of every Case, are easily reducible, to the lusts and interests mentioned by our Saviour, so the more immediate Causes, whether in Jews or Gentiles, will be found to resolve into want of Ingenuity and Understanding.

1. The Apostles were *slow* in believing before the Resurrecti-

on

on and Miſſion of the Spirit. Chriſt tells them, that then they were Fools, and ſlow of heart (inconſiderate and inadvertent, ſtupid and Diſingenuous.)

2. The moſt eminent *Rejecters* of the Goſpel were the Scribes and Phariſees: if we ſhall enquire after the Vertue or Modeſty, Candour or Ingenuity of theſe men, we will finde them the moſt barbarous and covetous, proud and ſupercilious, inſincere and hypocritical in the world, (how often doth our Saviour charge them with all theſe things?) And if we enquire after their Knowledge and Underſtanding, we ſhall finde them to have been meer Braggadocio's and pretenders; Chriſt often calls them blinde Phariſees, and blinde guides; he tells them that they

they were blinde leaders of the blinde: that seeing they did see and not perceive, hearing they did hear and did not understand. Mat. 23. 16, 26.

3. In the sixth of *John* we finde a mighty *Scandal* taken at the Gospel among the Auditors of Christ, they murmured, they strove amongst themselves, they finally revolted, upon a word, because they judged it to be, σκληρὸς λόγος a hard saying; They judged it so, because they did not understand it; they did not understand it, because they had not the Modesty and Meekness, Patience and Ingenuity to enquire the meaning of it, or to attend to that Explication which our Saviour made of that expression. Ver. 63.

4. In the 22 of St. *Mathew*, and

and the parallel places, we finde the Phariſees, the Scribes, the Lawyers, the Herodians, *courſing* our Saviour, *charging him with queſtions* about paying Tribute unto *Cæſar*, the Reſurrection, the Great Commandment, *&c.* If now ye will judge of the Ingenuity of theſe men, conſider there how thick and threefold, how furiouſly and how rudely, they fall upon him, how ſtupidly they perſiſt, every one judgeing that he was too hard for all the reſt, (*and anſwered them well*,) but every one adhering to his own Concluſion; Conſider how before they ſet upon him, they took counſel to entangle him, and ſent ſpies to entrap (or trepan) him; And for their *Underſtanding*, conſider how ignorant they were, not know-

knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

Neither was it thus among the Jews only, but among the Gentiles also; nor only in these, but in the two remaining degrees of the down-right scorn, and the contempt of the Gospel, and Persecution for it.

5. In the 26. of the *Acts* we finde the opinion that *Festus* had concerning the Gospel, (with what *contempt and scorn* he speaks of it, how roundly he pronounces that *Paul* was mad.) If you should judge of his Ingenuity in pronouncing, by his skilfulness in understanding of the Gospel; Consider how profound an account of *Paul*'s case, and of the Gospel he renders to *Agrippa*; Act. 25. 19. how that *it was a* (trifling) *question concerning the Jewish Superstition,*

ſtition, and concerning one Jeſus which was dead, whom Paul *affirmed to be alive.*

Ver. 32. In the 17 of the *Acts* we finde the *Athenians* χλευάζοντας, *making a mock at Paul,* and *ſcorning his Goſpel* as a moſt ridiculous thing; If you will know their manners and ingenuity, you may obſerve, that they condemned him for a Ver. 18. Babler before they heard him ſpeak, and if you will meaſure the depth of their Underſtanding of that which they deſpiſed, you may obſerve, that as they imagined Jeſus to be a ſtrange God; ſo they underſtood * *Anaſtaſis* (the Reſurrection) to be a Goddeſs. He ſeemeth (ſay they) to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange Gods, becauſe he Preached unto them Jeſus and the Reſurrection.

* Ibid.

6. The

6. The utmost degree of Contempt of the Gospel, is *Persecution* for it; and the highest imaginable instance of this, was the betraying and murdering of Christ himself; Concerning the Ingenuity or disingenuity of the contrivance, management, and execution of this prodigious Action, it were no less than madness to undertake to speak proportionally; And that this also proceeded not only from wickedness and *want* of *Ingenuity*, but from Ignorance and *want* of *Understanding*, we have an irrefragable assurance. Christ himself saith, that they knew not what they did; and our Apostle, that if they had understood themselves, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Luk. 23. 34. 1 Cor. 2. 8.

So that by all these instances, and many others of like nature, it doth appear, that (agreeably to the Sentence and Judgement of our Saviour) the contempt of the Gospel is finally resolved into a *shamefull Ignorance*, and *want* of *Ingenuity*; which will yet be more evident from Reason.

3. I come therefore in the third place to a consideration of the

(1) Principle into which the contempt of the Gospel is resolved, and of

(2) The *Postulata* upon which it is grounded. And from the Absurdity of one, and the Unreasonableness of the other, to make it appear, that *there is reason for the Contemners of the Gospel to be ashamed.*

1. From

1. From the conſideration of their Principle: After what hath been ſpoken in the former part of this Diſcourſe, and what is atteſted by experience, I take it for granted,

1. That the *ſpecial Object* of the Contempt of the Goſpel is the *Myſtical* part of it.

2. That the immediate reaſon of the contempt of theſe Myſteries is an Imagination, or Opinion of the *falſhood* of them.

3. That this Opinion of the falſhood of them, is derived from the *Obſcurity* and *Difficulty* of them.

Becauſe they are inexplicable, incomprehenſible, unintelligible, they conclude them to be falſe and incredible, merely Fantaſtical and Chimerical Imaginations, and ſo to be deſpiſed.

So that the Principle into which theſe Scorners do reſolve themſelves, is this; That whatſoever is Inexplicable, Incomprehenſible, Unintelligible is (by Philoſophers at leaſt and Wiſe men) to be accounted incredible, fantaſtical, fictitious, and ſo to be deſpiſed.

If this be not the Ratiocination, and this the Principle of thoſe *Virtuoſi*, of whom we are ſpeaking, I deſire to be better informed. But if it be, I would intreat them to ſtand a little, and conſider whither they are going, and whither this Principle and reaſoning will lead them.

Will it not lead them to caſt off not only Chriſtianity, but even all natural Religion, and force them (with the wiſe man in the Pſalmiſt) to ſay in their hearts

hearts that there is no God? Becauſe the *Nature*, and *Eſſence*, and *Attributes* of God are *inexplicable*, *incomprehenſible*, and *unintelligible*; He dwells in a light which no mortal eye can approach unto, ſuch knowledge is too wonderfull and excellent for us,and we cannot attain unto it.

But this I fear they do not account an inconvenience, but rather that this is that they would be at.

Again therefore, I entreat them to conſider;

Will not this Principle lead them to deny the moſt obvious things in nature? Will it not take away the very grounds of all that wiſdom,to which they do pretend, (the force even of Experiment and Demonſtration?)

Nay, Will it not finally bring

upon themſelves, that horrible inconvenience, that they are not to be offended if it ſhall be doubted or affirmed that they are not ſuch Wits as they pretend?

The moſt obvious things in Univerſal Nature, are Continued Quantity, and Local Motion: Theſe are either infinitely diviſible, or they are not. Will they deny this Disjunction, (and ſay, that they neither are ſo, nor not ſo?) Or will they make choice of either Member? Will they clear the difficulties that are in it? Or anſwer the Objections that may be made againſt it?

I preſume they may have heard of that famous Argument of *Zeno* (*Æliates*) called *Achilles*, How whileſt that mighty Diſputant (by the impoſſibilities and abſurdi-

absurdities on either side) was demonstrating that Local Motion was a thing impossible, one of his Auditors rose up and silently and sliely walked about the School, and so confuted him.

The most pervious, most clear, and comprehensible of all humane Sciences are the pure and unmixed Mathematicks, yet even in *Geometry* and Arithmetick how many things are forceably concluded to be true, which are inexplicable, unimaginable, incomprehensible? I shall instance in a very few; So few as not to need an Apology to the unlearned in those Sciences: So trivial, as not to admit of an Explication to the Learned.

That the least imaginable space should be equal to another (upon

the ſame Baſe of the ſame Altitude) whoſe ſides are protracted *in infinitum*, or a Finite greater than an Infinite. The equality of all Circular Angles of Contact. The everlaſting approximation and impoſſible concourſe of Aſymptots. The affections of ſurd and irrational Quantities, *&c.* are undeniably demonſtrated to be *true*, yet all theſe (and many more) are *inexplicable*, *incomprehenſible*, *unintelligible*.

They ſay they cannot explicate or imagine, (they cannot conceive or comprehend) the Myſtery of the Trinity, and Unity of the Godhead, and therefore they deſpiſe it as a mere fictitious imagination.

Do they therefore clearly underſtand, and fully comprehend, and can they expreſs and explicate

cate the Affections of Unity and Trinity in Numbers? That there should be a Quantity in Nature (one and not another) which with its infinite * ascending powers and † descending roots are all of them equal, or rather one and the same among themselves? Can they explicate, or imagine, or comprehend any one of the infinite potential roots of the Number Three?

* q.c.qq. &c.
† √q.√c. √qq.&c.
√q.√c. &c.

They say, they cannot understand how Christ should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin, and therefore they deride it.

Can they therefore understand how they themselves have been conceived, and born, and nourished up? And are they able to explain how, and by what progress from a little water

ter ſpilt upon a too luxurious ground there ſhould ſpring forth ſuch a Race of *Titans*, ſuch a Gigantick brood of fighters againſt Heaven, of Scoffers at Religion?

Briefly, they ſay they cannot comprehend how *God and Man* ſhould be *one Chriſt*, and therefore they contemn the Goſpel, and the Believers of it.

Can they therefore underſtand how the reaſonable Soul and Fleſh ſhould be one man?

Either they themſelves conſiſt of two natures (the one Corporeal, the other Spiritual and Incorporeal) or they do not. If they have nothing in them Incorporeal, can they underſtand and explain how ſenſleſs Atoms, how ſtupid Matter, and Local Motion ſhould work themſelves up

up to Sense and Cogitation, Reflection and Discourse, to Wit and Gallantry? (so as to make Jests and Ballads upon the Gospels.)

If they consist not only of a Body, but of a Soul (a spiritual Soul) also; Can they explain by what προσέγγισις, these two natures have been brought together; by what bands and ligaments they are united, and how the Communication betwixt them is performed? In one word, Can they explicate the Phenomena of Sense, Imagination, Memory, Reason, Wit and Bravery?

If they are able to perform these things, let the world be made happy by their labours, and let them receive the Pæans, and Acclamations, the Crowns and

and Garlands denyed to all that were before them. But if they *muſt be forced to confeſs* that *all theſe things are inexplicable, unimaginable, unintelligible, and incomprehenſible*, and will yet continue to deſpiſe the Myſteries of the Goſpel only for that reaſon, becauſe they *are inexplicable, unintelligible, incomprehenſible*, let them not be offended at a poor deſpiſed Miniſter of the Goſpel; if he ſhall declare and teſtifie to all the World, that theſe are not the *Wits*, or *Beaux Eſprits*, or *Forts Eſprits*; that they are Fleſh and not Spirit, mere ordinary mortal Wights as others are; that all their boaſting is but empty noiſe, and all they have to ſhew is a mere *Deceptio viſus*; that they may be Maſters of ſome devices that are pretty, skil-

skilfull in the Arts and Myſteries of Circulation and diſguiſe, but they are not ſuch dreadfull *Archimago's*, ſuch mighty Conjurers as they pretend. Let them therefore abandon their unreaſonable Principle, and be aſhamed.

2. But ſecondly, as is the *Principle* upon which they contemn, ſuch are their *Poſtulata*, (the τὰ αἰτήματα, or ζητήματα, as the Philoſophers and Mathematicians call them,) that is to ſay, the *terms* or *demands* upon which they pretend that they would ceaſe to deſpiſe the Goſpel, and for want of which they do contemn it.

Theſe *Poſtulata* are reducible to two Heads:

1. Philoſophical Demonſtration. Or,

2. The

2. The ſight of Miracles, Signs and Wonders (at their demand.)

This is the pretence of the Wits of theſe Times: if the truth of the Myſteries of the Goſpel might be proved to them by Demonſtration, or if they might ſee a Sign they would believe; This was the pretence at the time of the writing of my Text; (Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖον αἰτοῦσι καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσι) The Jews *required* a Sign, the Greeks (*i.e.* the Gentiles) ſought after Wiſdom (τὴν σοφίαν, *i.e.* φιλοσοφίαν,) and becauſe they were diſappointed of theſe, the myſtery (of Chriſt Crucified) was to the Jews a Scandal, to the Greeks fooliſhneſs. For brevity let us name theſe two:

1 Cor. 1. 23.

1. The Grecanick or Philoſophical *Poſtulatum.*

2. The

2. The Judaick or Semiotical *Postulatum.*

Now that the former of these proceeds from Ignorance, and want of Learning and Understanding; the later from Pride and Arrogance joyned with a blockish Stupidity; That the former is disingenious, the later disingenuous, that both of them are irrational and absurd is evident.

1. And first for the Grecanical *Postulatum*;

In the case of any Doctrine or question, to refuse a proof that is Cogent, and sufficient, (the only proof whereof a thing is capable) and to hanker or seek after a Proof impossible, or improper, (such as implies a Contradiction, or such as the nature of the question will not bear;) This (I say)

(I ſay) proceeds from Ignorance, from want of Learning and Underſtanding, and this is the caſe of the Grecanick or Philoſophical *Poſtulatum.*

To give a rational or Philoſophical Demonſtration of the truth of the Goſpel, there are but three wayes imaginable in Nature: By Arguments, either,

1. *A Priori*, from the common Principles of Intelligence. Or,
2. *A Poſteriori*, from experiment and ſenſible obſervations.

And this latter way of arguing muſt be drawn either,

1. From inſtances of things Novel and Anomalous in Nature, things purpoſely deſigned for ſuch Arguments: Or elſe,
2. It muſt be taken from the common

common and ordinary, the ſtanding and perpetnal Phenomena of Nature.

A *Demonſtration à poſteriori* by *particular Inſtances* of the Divine Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, purpoſely deſigned for that end, was the proof offered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; *This they rejected*; To prove particular Myſteries, Myſteries hidden from Ages, (and ſo declared and profeſſed to be by the Promulgers) by general and perpetual Phenomena of Nature, is in nature impoſſible to perform, and ſenceleſs to require: To prove any thing concerning the Eſſence and Nature of God *per cauſas*, by Arguments *à Priori* ſuppoſes cauſes precedent to the Eſſence of God himſelf, and implies a Contradiction; So then,

the Grecanick or Philoſophical *Poſtulatum* proceeds from Ignorance and want of Learning, and is at beſt diſingenuous, and Theoretically abſurd.

2. Again ſecondly, (concerning the Judaical or Semeiotical *Poſtulatum*) After numerous, or rather innumerable Atteſtations by Signs and Wonders notoriouſly known (and by themſelves acknowledged) or ſufficiently and authentically proved, or delivered down by uncontroulable and irreproveable Tradition, yet ſtill to *demand* and *require more Signs*, Signs of their own election, accompanied with circumſtances of their own preſcription; Is not this to tempt and limit the Almighty? To make themſelves Arbiters of the Emanations of his Power and Wiſdom?

dom? To ſuppoſe that thoſe ought to be ſubſervient to their wanton curioſity; Is it not to expect that God himſelf ſhould Lacquey after them, to make him a doer of Tricks at their ſenceleſs and impudent demand? Is not this an Aſinine and an impious ſtupidity? A compoſition of the higheſt degrees of *Intellectual* and *Moral Abſurdity* which is imaginable?

Now (therefore) that this was, and is, (and to the end of the world muſt ever now be) the caſe of the Jewiſh or Semeiotical *Poſtulatum*, is alſo plain and evident.

In Confirmation of the Goſpel, Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought far more (and more conſiderable) Signs and Wonders, than before (or ſince) that time

were ever wrought ſince the Creation of the world, yet all this will not content them: Notwithſtanding all this, σημεῖον αἰτοῦσι, (they *require* a ſign) the meaning whereof is better interpreted by their Practice and behaviour to our Saviour than by the Dictionary; And of this their behaviour I ſhall only produce two or three inſtances.

In the ſixth of *John* we finde that Chriſt fed 5000 men with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, and when they had ſeen the Miracle, they were ſo taken with it, that they * ſaid that he *was that Prophet which ſhould come*, and they would have taken him by force and made him a King.

* Ver. 14. σημεῖον ὃ ἐποίησε. Ver. 15.

But the very next day, theſe very men, that had ſeen, and felt, and taſted of, the Miracle (becauſe

cause he told them that they followed him for the Loaves) take a miff at him, they pirk up themselves, and come boldly and malepertly to him, saying, * What Sign shewest thou, that we may *see* and believe? What do'st thou work? As if the former *Miracle* had not been now a *Sign*. Ver. 30. * τί σημεῖον ποιεῖς;

When Christ hung upon the Cross, the Noble and the Mighty, the Grave and Wise amongst them, (the chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders) came, and offered him a bargain, if he would then (just then) come down from the Cross, they would believe; but our Lord Christ had just then something else to do. Mat. 27. 40, 41, 42.

In the eighth of *Mark* the Pharisees came forth, and began to question him (συζητεῖν, to cavil, and dispute with him) σημεῖον ζητοῦντες, Ver. 11. *vide* Mat. 16. 1, 4. 12. 38, 39. Luk. 11. 16, 29, 30.

(*requiring* a ſign) *ſeeking of him a ſign from Heaven tempting him*; They would have (and that preſently upon the ſpot) a ſign, not δύναμιν, but τέρας, or that which is properly τὸ σημεῖον; not from Winde, or Sea, or Earth, but from Heaven; not that they intended to be his Diſciples, but for a trial of his skill and ability; was not this a Gallant and a Wiſe, a Noble and a Worthy *Poſtulatum*? Could it chuſe but move him to a compliance?

Vide Joh. 4. 48.

This moved him indeed, to comply ſo far with his own deſign, as to promiſe them a ſign; the ſign of the *Prophet Jonas* (that irrefragable δικαίωμα of his Goſpel) which ſhould render them inexcuſable; But though he was meek and lowly of heart, the ſoft and gentle Lamb of God,

ſo

so that he suffered himself to be accused, condemned, buffeted, and spit upon, and yet held his peace (as a Lamb that is dumb so opened he not his mouth) Yet the nobleness and ingenuity of this *Postulatum* kindled a fire within him, so that he spake with his tongue. This moved him to scorn and indignation, so that in effect he called them bastards for for their labour, telling them that they were (no sons of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, but) a wicked and adulterous Generation; and that no sign should be given them but the sign of the Prophet *Jonas*. Mat. 12. 38, 39.

I suppose I shall need to say no more concerning the absurdity and unreasonableness of the Jewish or Semeiotical *Postulatum*. And

I have now done with the former part of my undertaking, which was to endeavour to make it appear,

That the Comtemners of the Goſpel have reaſon to be aſhamed of their Prejudices.

2. I come now to the ſecond, which is the laſt part of what I have propounded, *viz.* to ſhew,

That there is no reaſon for Chriſtians or for Preachers to be aſhamed of the Goſpel;

And that upon two Conſiderations:

1. *Propter veritatis Evidentiam.*

2. *Propter virtutis Excellentiam.*

The former of which is implied (if it were not the truth of God, it could not be the Power of God.)

The

The later is expreſſed, *For it is the Power of God to ſalvation to every one that believeth.*

The evidence of the Truth is ſo great that whoſoever duly conſiders it will certainly believe the Goſpel.

The Virtue and Excellency of the Goſpel is ſo great, that whoſoever truly believes the Goſpel ſhall infallibly be ſaved.

1. Firſt, I am to ſpeak of the Evidence of the truth of the Goſpel. But becauſe it is here only implied, and becauſe I have * formerly employed my poor endeavours upon that Argument, I ſhall only briefly touch upon it.

* Serm. againſt Antiſcript.

The Myſteries of the Goſpel, though they are inexplicable and inconceivable, yet are they not

not incredible, though incomprehenſible, yet they are not unaccountable; Nor was the Author and Finiſher of the Chriſtian Faith ſo ſevere upon the underſtanding of his followers, as to exact a Belief without a ſufficient proof and Demonſtration of the truth of that which he delivered.

Though he would not offer at the Grecanick way (which he knew to be impoſſible to grant, to be abſurd and unreaſonable to require) yet he would afford it that Demonſtration whereof it was capable (a Demonſtration properly ſo called, accommodate to the Underſtanding of all Mankinde, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, Noble and Ignoble, Learned and Unlearned) ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ πνεύματος.

He

He that refused to gratifie the impudent Scribes and Pharisees in their way, would not leave the truth of the Gospel undemonstrated in his own.

And of the truth of all the Mysteries which he delivered, this is the *Analemma Catholicon*, the Common, the Universal, the Comprehensive demonstration.

He that made himself the Son of God (as the Jews expres it) That said he was one with God (*I and the Father are one*) that he was in the Father, and the Father in him; That declared the Mission and Emanation of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, and that always spoke of him as a person distinct; And that these three are one. Joh. 10. 30. 14. 11. 1 Joh. 5. 7.

In a word; He that was the Author of these and all other Myste-

Myſteries whereof we have been ſpeaking, did not put the iſſue of believing upon his Αυτὸς ἔφα, but upon an undeniable and unrefuſeable Criterion.

Joh.10.38. *If I do not the works of my Father believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works,* (ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ πιστεύητε) that ye may *know* (by Demonſtration) as well as *believe*, that I am in the Father, and he in me.

He did not only bear witneſs to himſelf, (although he died in teſtimony of his Doctrine) He had not only the glorious Company of the Apoſtles, the goodly fellowſhip of the Prophets, the noble Army of Martyrs for his Witneſſes; But he called Heaven and Earth to witneſs, He ſubpena'd whatever was in Heaven, and Earth, and in the Sea, and

and in all deep places, to bear teſtimony to him.

There were three that bore witneſs in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, thoſe three which he affirmed to be one. The Angels miniſtred unto him; The Devils trembled and fled before him; Plants and Animals, the Winde and Sea obeyed him; The Stars in their courſes, or rather out of their courſes militated for him. To give teſtimony to *Conſummatum eſt*, at the time of his Death, the Sun was eclipſed, the Moon being at the Full. To indicate the place of his Nativity, at the time of his Birth a new Star was made on purpoſe. Health and Sickneſs, Life and Death, and Hades, gave in their teſtimonies by their obedience to his word. Yet once more,

more, he ſhook the Heavens, and ſent down the Holy Spirit upon his followers: he ſhook the Earth alſo, he tore the Rocks and opened the Graves, and at his powerfull voice the bodies of the Saints aroſe: And leſt it ſhould be ſaid, He raiſed others but himſelf he could not raiſe; As he finiſhed the Great Myſtery of Chriſtianity by his Death, ſo alſo he proved the truth of it by his Reſurrection; As he died for our Sins, ſo he roſe again for our Juſtification, for our Juſtification is in the Belief of that, and all other, the Myſteries of Chriſtianity.

Rom. 4. 24.

Theſe and many more, are heads of Arguments, which whoever duly conſiders and underſtands, will certainly believe the Goſpel *propter veritatis Evidentiam.*

2. It

2. It remains only to shew, that whosoever doth truly believe the Gospel, shall infallibly be saved *Propter Bonitatis*, or *Virtutis Excellentiam*; *Because it is the Power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.*

In speaking of which Argument, I need not go about to prove, that the Power of the Gospel is the Power of God, (in which respect it is called the (*a*) Hand or (*b*) Arm of the Lord, (*c*) the Sword of the Spirit, (*d*) the Grace of God, bringing Salvation, and the like.)

a Act. 11. 21. *b* Isa. 53. 1. *c* Rom. 10. 16. Eph. 6. 17. *d* Tit. 2. 11.

Neither shall I stand upon a Comparison of the Gospel, with the Grecanical or Judaical Institutions, (a man may believe all that ever was written by Philosophers, and yet doubt whether there is, (or can be) such a thing

thing as Salvation, yea or no. A man may believe, whatever is explicitely and expreſly delivered in the Law of *Moſes*, and yet not be ſaved) But my intention is (barely and nakedly) this, By a ſhort Reflexion upon the Way and Method of the Actions of Mankinde, and the Diſcoveries and Contents of the Goſpel (well known to thoſe that hear me) to manifeſt the truth of this Propoſition, *That, every man that believeth the Goſpel* (*i. e.* that *truly and actually* * *abideth* in that belief) *ſhall infallibly be ſaved.*

* κατέχων ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ. Luk. 8. 15. ἔχων ἐν ἐπιγνώσει. Rom. 1. 28.

Becauſe whoſoever frames his Actions according to the Rules and Principles (the Precepts and Preſcriptions of the Goſpel,) ſhall infallibly be ſaved.

And becauſe, it is of the nature of man, to frame his Actions according

according to his Actual and perſevering Judgement and Belief.

The Nature and Eſſence of man conſiſts in his Underſtanding; and for a man not to follow the ſtedfaſt and conſtant, the actual and final dictate of his Underſtanding, is impoſſible in Nature, and indeed implies a Contradiction.

He that believes, that there is neither God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell, Salvation nor Damnation; And that he hath not an Immortal Soul (*i. e.*) a Soul to ſave; ſuch a man (If at leaſt he hath attained to thoſe great accompliſhments of Rudeneſs and Incivility) will make it his buſineſs to fill up his meaſure of Debaucheries, and Impieties; will think it Brave (perhaps) and Witty, to Blaſpheme God, and

ſcoff at Religion; will make it a matter of Gallantry and noble Courage and Reſolution, to challenge God to damn him, or bid the Devil take him Body and Soul; will ſpend his time in Revelling and Drunkenneſs, in Chambering and Wantonneſs; Expecting and hoping to die like a beaſt, he will be ſure to live like one; And in concluſion will finde himſelf diſappointed of this glorious hope (this goodly, noble, manly expectation) and that his Miſcreancy and the errour of his Judgement hath betrayed him into eternal miſery.

Whileſt (on the other ſide) he that believes the Declarations, and Promiſes, and Threatnings, of the Goſpel, will have his fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.

He

He that firmly and stedfastly believes, that the Soul which Actuates his body is an Immortal Being (a subsistence which shall and must endure to all eternity;)

That after Death he must appear before the Tribunal of God and Christ, to answer for the things done in the body; 2 Cor. 5. 10.

That from thence he shall be transmitted to a state either of Eternal Happiness, or Eternal Misery; either to be entertained (in the Vision of God, in the fellowship of Saints and Angels) with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory: Or secluded from the sight of God, and treated with the Devil and his Angels, with torment unconceivable, unexpressible, and that to all Eternity.

This man, if he might gain all

the Profits, and Honours and Pleaſures, if he might decline all the afflictions of this world, will not loſe his own Soul: *Fruſtra blanditiæ venitis ad hunc, fruſtra nequitiæ venitis ad hunc.* Conſidering that light and momentany things bear no proportion to the exceeding weight and moment of thoſe which are Eternal, he will forthwith endeavour *to lay hold upon Eternal Life*, and make haſte to *eſcape the Wrath to come*; And to that end he will devour all difficulties, and neglect no means or opportunities.

He that believes, that the only way to Happineſs is the way to Holineſs; That without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God; That no unclean thing ſhall enter there, That the Impious, the Unjuſt, the Intemperate, the Laſcivious (con-

Heb. 12. 14.
1 Cor. 6. 9.

(continuing so) shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

This man will endeavour to purifie himself, to mortifie all his carnal lusts and affections, to cleanse himself from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

Again, he that believes and considers the Corruption and Impotence of his natural Condition, and the design of Christs coming into the world, what he hath already done, and what he is still in doing for him;

How that himself (and every man) is by nature a childe of wrath, that Sin reigns in his mortal body, that he lies under a bondage from which he cannot redeem, a Guilt from which he cannot acquit himself;

Eph. 2. 3.

Rom. 7. 24.

Rom. 3. 20. That no flesh is justified in the sight of God.

Whosoever, I say, doth believe this concerning himself; and (on the other side) concerning Christ, that to this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, * that he might save sinners; † That the world through him might be saved;

* 1 Tim. 1. 15. † Joh. 3. 17.

That to this end (and this end only) he descended from Heaven; This was the end of his Conversation upon Earth, his Life and Doctrine, his Preaching and Example; This was the end of his Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Session at the Right hand of God; That by the sufferings of his Life, and the inestimable value of his Blood, the world might be *Justified* and *Redeemed from the Guilt of their sins*,

sins, rescued from the miseries of the world to come.

And that by the operation of his Doctrine, and Example, and the power of his Intercession, the world might be *sanctified, Delivered from the Dominion of sin, purified and prepared to be admitted to the Vision of the most holy God, Fruition of the Life to come.*

I say, that the man that *firmly*, and *stedfastly*, and *actually* believes these things, will not (nay, indeed that he cannot) neglect so great Salvation; That he will not trample upon the blood of the everlasting Covenant, or despise the Spirit of Grace, or crucifie afresh the Lord of Glory, and put him to an open shame. But that for his continual cleansing, from his past transgressions,

he will daily reſort to the fountain which Chriſt hath opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, offering and preſenting his head and his heart (his minde and his affections) to the blood of ſprinkling; And that for the obtaining of preventing, and following Grace, to preſerve him from lapſing for the time to come, He will throw himſelf daily at the feet of that High-Prieſt, which is ſenſible of his Infirmities, and which ſits at Gods Right hand, making Interceſſion for him, and with ſighs and unutterable groans he will implore the Aſſiſtance of that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities:

And that continuing, and perſevering in this Courſe, (by the Grace of God which never faileth them that ſeek him) he will certain-

certainly conform himself to the Commands of Christ, and compose himself to his Example, till at length he be transformed to his Image; *He will add to his Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge*—— and so onwards, He will goe on from strength to strength untill he appear before God in Glory.

I say, that such a man, by denying ungodlines and worldly Lusts, and living Soberly, and Righteously, and Godly in this present world, will work out his Salvation with fear and trembling, and in the end of his dayes will *certainly* and *infallibly attain to the end of his hopes*, namely, the *Salvation of his Soul*. So that the Gospel is indeed the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation to all men: It is the Tit. 2.12.

power

power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth.

TO come therefore to a Concluſion: Judge now in your ſelves Brethren, and judge Righteous Judgement; Is this a Goſpel which is to be deſpiſed? A Diſpenſation whereof a Miniſter or a Chriſtian ought to be aſhamed? Are the Myſteries of this Goſpel to be derided and drolled upon? To be traveſtied or turned into *Burleſque* or *Macaronique*? Is this to be a Brave and a Gallant perſon? A Spark and a Wit? Or is it indeed to have never a ſpark of Wit or Gallantry?

Men, Brethren, and Fathers; If the time, and your patience, and my ſtrength would bear it, I would take unto me boldneſs, and

and freely speak unto you concerning the Gospel of our Saviour; I would Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort.

I would severally and distinctly address my self to every sort, and every Degree of those that hear me, Ecclesiastical and Civil, Young and Old, Wise and Unwise, Noble and Ignoble.

I would speak unto you young men of the Clergy, that you would not be offended at the Mysteries of the Gospel, or think it a matter of Wit or of Learning, either to despise or to go about to mend them.

That you will neither be Drolled nor Disputed, Cajoled, nor faced out of your Religion, or suffer the *Mauvais hont* (the evil shame) to be put upon you.

That

That you will not believe that it hath been only dull formality, a want of the ſmartneſs of your Wit, or depth of your Learning, which hath retained your Fathers and Predeceſſors, in the belief and the Profeſſion of the plain, and ſimple Articles of the Catholick Faith. Be not deceived Brethren; *Vixerunt fortes ante Agamemnona* ——.

Be not ſeduced by thoſe who pretending to remove the Scandal of the Croſs of Chriſt (which
Gal. 5. 11. thing St. *Paul* counted an abſurdity in Chriſtianity) would rob you of a moſt divine and excellent Religion, and ſubſtitute in its place a rotten and depraved Philoſophy; Thoſe I mean who never have been able with all their Wit, Reaſon, and Learning, to explicate or comprehend

prehend the Mysteries or Mechanies of a Mite, or of a Flea, of a Plant or Stone, or any one of the innumerable things which are before them, and yet they take upon them to controul the plain literal, designed and reiterated Declarations of Christ and his Apostles concerning the Mysteries of the Godhead. Those who Grammaticizing pedantically, and Criticizing spuriously, upon a few Greek Particles or words, would cozen the World of the benefit of the blood of Christ, and Christ himself of his Divinity; and put him off with a fantastical and Poetical Apotheosis.

I would speak unto you *Fathers*, because ye have known the Father and the Son, ye understand the effect and consequence

quence of the Myſteries of the Goſpel to the Salvation of men, that ye will continue to ſtrive earneſtly to retain that faith (which is thought by ſome to be upon the wing, that Faith) which was once delivered to the Saints.

I would ſpeak unto you (σοφοὶ) *Wiſe men* or *Philoſophers*; *Paul* ſpeaking to the men at *Athens*, puts them in minde of a ſaying of a Poet of their own; I would call to your Remembrance a Saying of a Philoſopher of our own, (a Philoſopher of great renown) which is to this effect: That a profound conſideration of the reaſon, and comprehenſion of the circumſtances of things (a deep doſe of Philoſophy) will make a man Religious; And that the contempt

Act. 17. 28.

of

of Religion is an infallible argument of one that is a ſmatterer only, and half-witted.

I would ſpeak unto ye *Nobles*, that ye would be Noble as the *Beræans* were; That ye will ſearch, examine, and conſider, whether the caſe of the Goſpel be ſuch as hath been repreſented, yea or no: And then I am ſure ye will continue zealouſly and vigorouſly to ſupport the Goſpel.

I would take heart and courage, and improve in an humble confidence, ſo far as to prefer a Petition to King, Lords, and Commons (the Noble, the Mighty, and the Wiſe) that (at this time eſpecially) they will be carefull of Religion, and tender of the Intereſts of the Goſpel.

I would

I would humbly endeavour to bring to remembrance, who it is by whom Kings Reign, and Princes decree Juſtice; And what it is to be *Defender of the truly Antient, Catholick and Apoſtolick Faith.*

I would endeavour to Demonſtrate that neither Forts nor Caſtles, Armies nor Navies, Arms nor Ammunition, Money nor Men, (to ſay nothing of Allies or Confederates, or the Staff of *Egypt*) are ſo powerfull a ſupport of the Crowns of Princes as the Goſpel; Nay, not as a few lines of this one Epiſtle of our High noſed *Galilean* (as the Scoffers have been wont to call him) duly imbibed into the Souls and Conſciences of men, namely, that ſaying at the beginning of Chap. 13.

Let

Let every soul be subject to the Higher Powers, for there is no power but of God, the Powers that be, are Ordained of God—— And they that Resist shall receive to themselves Damnation; the belief of this would be sure to compose the mindes of all Dissenters so as to keep peace and obedience at home. Rom. 13. 1, 2, &c.

And the belief of that which follows would defend us from our enemies abroad; this would raise Taxes and Contributions, Subsidies and Royal Aids, procure all things necessary for the maintenance of Just Wars abroad; For *for this cause also pay ye tribute, because they are Christs Ministers*, &c. So powerfull and usefull is the Gospel, where it is believed, to maintain all the parts and Interests, and to com- Ver. 6, 7.

mand all the ſuccours and neceſſary ſupplies of Government, to bring fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute belongeth.

Wherefore I would not fear humbly to make an Application in the words of King *David*:

Pſal. 2. 12. *Be wiſe now therefore O ye Kings, be learned ye that are Judges of the Earth, ſerve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce unto him with reverence; kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ſo ye periſh from the right way.*

But I can only be permitted to make one common and promiſcuous Application, to high and low, rich and poor, one with another, namely, To charge upon your memory (and pray that it may reſt upon my own) one ſaying of Chriſt himſelf,

that

that dreadfull saying in *Mark* 8.
"*If any one shall be ashamed of* Mar. 8.38.
"*me, or of my words in this adul-*
"*terous and sinfull Generation:*
"*Of him shall the Son of man be*
"*ashamed, when he cometh in the*
"*Glory of his Father, with his*
"*holy Angels.* And without any Apology for my boldness or indiscretions, to conclude in the words of the Text:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: For it is the Power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth.

FINIS.

Rules and Directions for Prayer and Meditation: Written by the late Right Reverend Father in God *Bryan Duppa* Lord Bishop of *Winton.* Sold by *James Collins* at the Kings Arms in *Ludgate-street.*